

An Eaglemoss Publication

£1.50
UK &
EIRE

THE SPINE CHILLER COLLECTION

6



Reading's never been so
SCARY!

LMI25 Malt



Want to get the **CREEPS** again next week?
To make sure you get your copy of
The SpineChiller Collection every week,
ask an adult either to place a regular order with
your magazine retailer or take out a subscription
to The SpineChiller Collection.

UK

Subscriptions/Back Numbers

Simply write to The SpineChiller Collection, PO Box 1, Hastings, TN35 4TJ, enclosing a cheque/postal order made payable to Woodgate (EagleMoss) Ltd for the cover price x the number of parts you wish to receive (minimum subscription 12 parts). Or call our credit card hotline on 01424 755 755.

UK Enquiries

Subscriptions/Back Numbers
Customer Services: 01424 755 755

UK Trade Enquiries

Gary Neale 0171 581 1371

Australia and New Zealand

Subscriptions: Write to the relevant address below or call the order hotline. Please enclose a cheque/money order for the cover price x the number of parts you wish to receive (minimum subscription is 12 parts).

Back Numbers: Either ask your magazine retailer to order the copies for you or, in case of any difficulties, write to the relevant address below, enclosing a cheque/money order for the cover price x the number of parts you wish to receive.

Australia Enquiries

Telephone: (03) 9872 4000.
Address: The SpineChiller Collection, MC Box 460, Eastern Mail Centre, VIC 3110. Please make cheques payable to Bisset Magazine Services P/L.

New Zealand Enquiries

Telephone: (09) 625 3010.
Address: The SpineChiller Collection, PO Box 24013, Royal Oak, Auckland. Please make cheques payable to Mercury Direct Marketing.

South Africa

Subscriptions:
Please call the order hotline on (011) 652 1807.

Back Numbers: Please write to The SpineChiller Collection, Private Bag 18, Centurion, 0046, enclosing a cheque/money order made payable to EagleMoss Publications for the cover price x the number of parts you wish to receive.

Singapore, Malaysia, Malta & Cyprus

Back Numbers available from your magazine retailer.

Credits

Wax Coffins from Mega Scary Stories for Sleepovers © Lovell House 1996

Key To Strands: Front Cover-FC, Super Scary Story-SSS, Our Haunted World-OHW, Strange But True-SBT, Puzzles-PUZ, Classic Serial-CS, The Unexplained-TU.

Photographs: Bridgeman Art Library (Palazzo Ducale, Venice) TU2(t); Mary Evans Picture Library Ltd CS3(t), TU1(t), TU2(cr); Fortean Picture Library (Cliff Crook) SBT1(c, b), (Rene Dahinden) SBT2(b), (Dr Elmar R Gruber) TU1(br); Guildhall Library (Corporation Of London) OHW1(cu); Images Colour Library (The Charles Walker Collection) TU1(b), TU2(b); Science Photo Library Ltd (Julian Baum) OHW2(t); Zefa Picture Library OHW1(tr).

Illustrations: Lee Gibbons TU1-2(sp); John Higgins OHW1(b), OHW2(b); Christian Hook CS1-4(sp); Garry Leach OHW3-4(sp); David Millgate FRONT COVER(sp); Baz Rowell IFC(b), PUZ1-3(sp); Will Simpson SSS1-7(sp); David Wyatt (Sarah Brown Agency) FRONT COVER(b), OHW1(c), SBT1-2(sp), SBT2(l).

Editorial and distribution offices
EagleMoss Publications Ltd,
7 Cromwell Road, London SW7 2HR
Editor: Janet Sacks **Art Editor:** Tracy Killick
Section Editors:
Vanessa Morgan, Carey Denton
Designers: Andy Archer, Jessica Watts
Picture Researchers: Katie Nesling, Lon Gibbons
Production Controller: Teresa Magnowska
© 1997 EagleMoss Publications
All rights reserved
Printed by: CSM Impact, England
Colour origination by: Colourscan, Singapore

FREE IN
ISSUE 7
Another
Spooky Snap!



6

CONTENTS

SUPER SCARY STORY
Wax Coffins

OUR HAUNTED WORLD
England
The Babysitter

STRANGE BUT TRUE
Bigfoot

CLASSIC SERIAL
The Portrait Painter
Chapter 2

PUZZLES
Planet Venus

THE UNEXPLAINED
Astral Travels

Next week in
The SPINECHILLER
Collection

SUPER SCARY STORY
Green Thumb

OUR HAUNTED WORLD
Northern Russia
Good Neighbours

STRANGE BUT TRUE
Borley Rectory

CLASSIC SERIAL
Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde
Chapter 1

PUZZLES
Robots

THE UNEXPLAINED
Werewolves

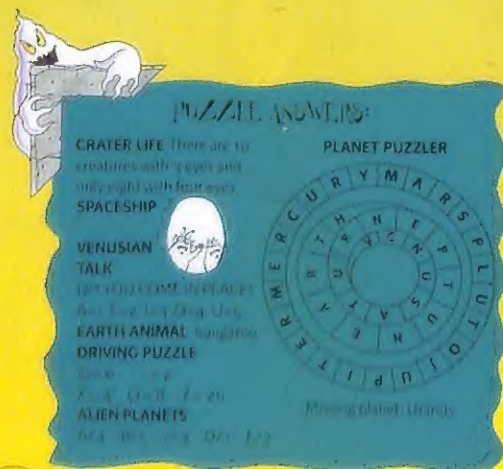
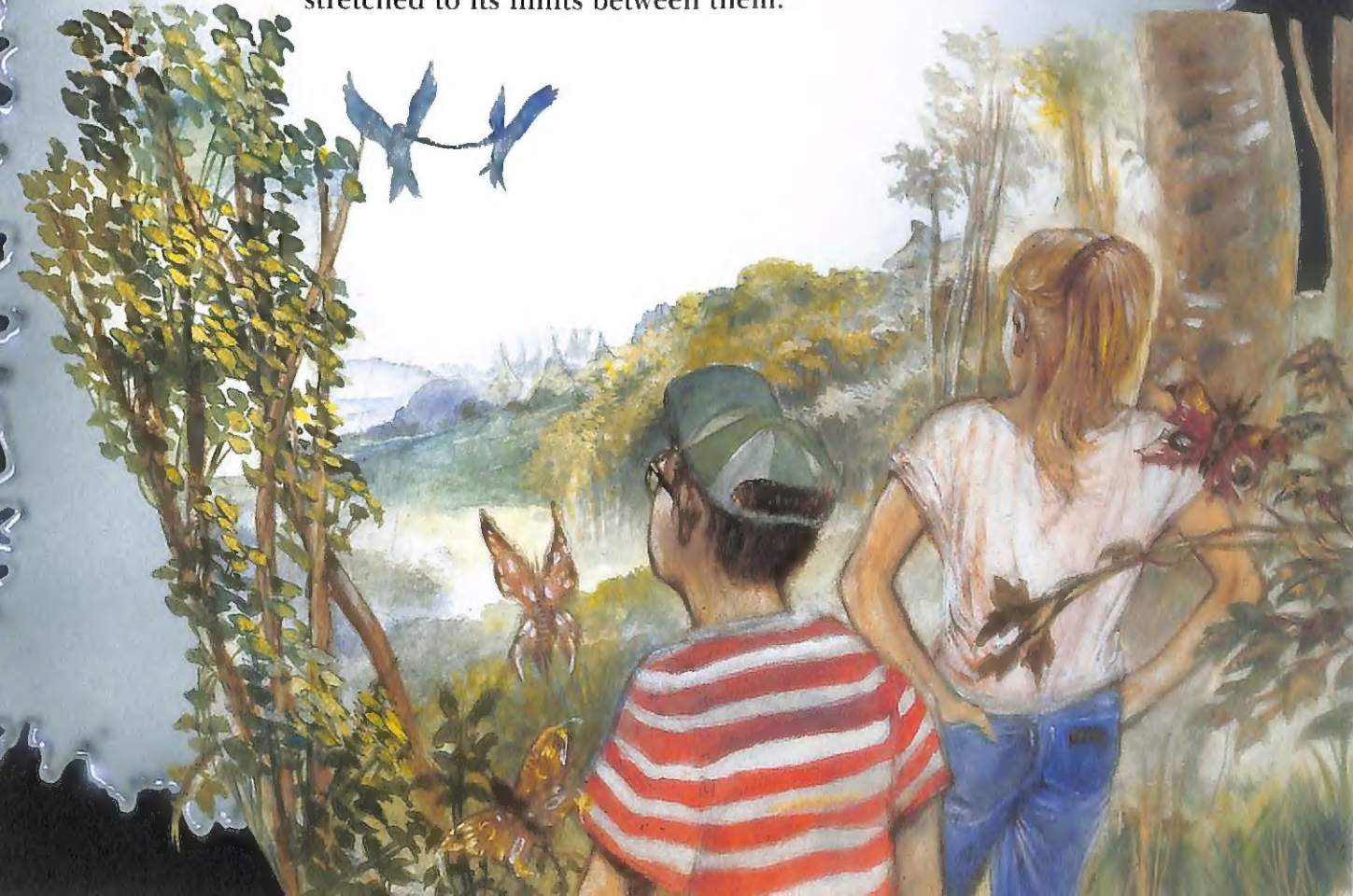
Wax Coffins

White butterflies flapped about like living flower petals, and sunlight filtered through the oak and beech trees as Linda and her brother, Ricky, picked their way through woods still damp with early morning dew. Suddenly, Linda stopped and touched Ricky's arm. "I have a funny feeling," she said.

"Like what?" Ricky asked. At thirteen, he was a year younger than she was, but he always felt like her older brother.

"I feel as though we're being watched," Linda replied. "I mean, I'm not even sure it's a person... it could be an animal."

Ricky looked around. He noticed a few deer tracks and, high overhead, two birds seemed to be in a tug-of-war with a worm stretched to its limits between them.





He was about to tell Linda she was just imagining things when he happened to notice some bees hovering around a clump of wild honeysuckle, which was some distance away. Squinting through his thick glasses, he realised there was something odd about the bees. Although they were far away, he could see them – despite his bad eyesight! That meant they had to be unusually large. And, even weirder, the bees seemed to be watching them.

“Hey, Linda,” he began, “you’re right. Take a look at...”

Then he realised that Linda was no longer by his side. He’d been so busy looking at the bees, he hadn’t seen her walk on ahead, so he hurried to catch her up.

“What’s that man doing?” Linda asked, as her brother came up beside her. She was pointing towards a meadow where an elderly man was kneeling over one of many odd-looking wooden boxes. They were all about half a metre tall, except for one that was nearly twice as large. Then her mouth dropped open as she got a better look at the man. His back and arms were completely covered with bees, as though he



were wearing a living jacket of the creepy, crawling, buzzing things!

The man’s whole attention was on the box before him. From it he had pulled a square panel honeycombed with bees.

“Excuse me,” Linda called over to him. “Are you a bee-keeper?”

“That I am,” the man replied, barely glancing up.

“I’ve never seen anything like that,” Ricky gasped, his eyes on the writhing swarm of bees. They were now all over the man’s bare hands as he handled the square panel. “Aren’t you afraid you’ll get stung?” he called out.

“Why would the bees do that?” The man stood up and looked at them, without a trace of a smile. “They know I won’t hurt them, so why would they hurt me?” He paused for a moment. “Where are you from?” he asked, his tone not very friendly.

“We’re from Birmingham,” Linda replied. “We’re visiting our grandparents here in Sussex for our Easter holidays.”

“We really like it here,” Ricky added. “It’s beautiful countryside and there’s...” He stopped, realising that the man was paying him no attention. The beekeeper’s gaze was fixed on Linda. It wasn’t so much that he was looking at her, more as if he were thinking about her.

Then, all of a sudden, the man made an odd clicking noise with his tongue, and the bees on his back and arms took



flight. Some settled in the wooden hives while others headed off past an old, run-down cottage, then continued on into the gaping mouth of a cave up on a rocky hillside.

“How do you do that?” Linda asked.

“Do you know anything about bees?” the old man asked her, not responding directly to her question.

“I did a project at school a couple of years ago,” Linda said. “I know that there are lots of worker and drone bees, but only one queen. I also know that bees have long, hollow tongues.

And the strangest thing is that a bee has five eyes – three small ones in a triangle on its head, and a large compound eye on each side of its head. Each compound eye is made of thousands of single eyes crowded close together.” Feeling proud of

all she knew, Linda smiled.

The old man nodded approval. “Do you know how much honey a single bee makes in its lifetime?” he asked. When they both shrugged, he added, contemptuously, “Only one-tenth of a pound, that’s 45 grams.”

“Well,” Ricky said with a weak smile, “I guess if that’s all they can do, that’s all they can do!”

The old man rubbed the stubble of beard on his face. “Well, I say they can do better,” he said, cryptically.

“Are you working on a way to get them to produce more?” Ricky asked, feeling more and more uncomfortable.

A strange smile was the man’s only response.



A girl’s voice called suddenly from the dilapidated cottage, which was about thirty metres away. “Thaddeus, please come in!” The girl sounded very upset.

Without a word of farewell, the old man headed off to the house with a sour look on his face. A moment later a loud exchange of voices practically exploded from the place.

“Please let me return,” the girl pleaded with him.

“You’re too old,” the beekeeper snarled. “You’ve had your five years. Five is the limit!”

Disturbed by the yelling, Ricky and Linda made a hasty retreat. As they clambered up the bank and back into the woods, they heard a door slamming loudly.

They then saw the old man heading up from the cottage to the cave on the hillside.

"That guy gives me the creeps!" Ricky exclaimed.

"Me too," Linda agreed. "I wonder what he's up to, and who he was arguing with in that house?"

Ricky shrugged. "Well, I suppose he's developing some kind of hybrid bee that will make more honey," he said, as they trudged back through the woods. "As far as that girl in the house is..."

Suddenly Ricky stopped dead in his tracks. There, in neat rows directly in front of them, were several graves. One was empty and looked freshly dug.

"There aren't any names on the markers," Linda said, peering closer. "Just initials." Her brow wrinkled. "And look at the dates. These are all children's graves."

"That's right," Ricky said, shuddering. "I wonder why this number is written on them?" he asked, pointing below the initials. There, on each of the markers, was the number five.



icky avoided talking about the whole experience over the next few days. When Linda mentioned it, he told her he did not want to

go back to where the strange old beekeeper lived. Linda, on the other hand, was consumed with curiosity.

Three days later, late in the afternoon, she found her chance to go back and investigate. Her grandparents were going into town to buy groceries for the week and, afterwards, going on to see a film. Claiming she did not feel well, Linda told them she wanted to stay at home.

"You're going back there, aren't you?" Ricky accused her.

"No, I'm not," she lied.

But no sooner had Ricky and their grandparents rattled off down the road in the old estate car, than Linda headed off towards the beekeeper's place. Again, as she headed through the woods, she had the feeling she was being watched, seemingly from somewhere high in the trees. In the far distance she could see what appeared to be a strange flock of birds, like a cloud darkening the sky. It wasn't until she drew a little closer that her suspicions were confirmed. What she was seeing was a huge swarm of bees.

Feeling that she ought to be afraid, that she should turn round and run for her life, Linda was nonetheless compelled to keep walking. She was drawn by a curiosity she couldn't quite explain.

As she walked on, she noticed that the flowers in the area were different from how they had looked when she and Ricky had passed through a few days before. No longer vibrant and full of fragrance, the wild flowers were now withered and had no scent at all. Even the



trees had a dreary, almost lifeless look about them.

Entering the meadow where she had first spotted the beekeeper, she saw no sign of the man. But there was a bit of smoke wafting from the chimney of the run-down cottage, and Linda was certain she'd just caught a glimpse

of someone passing by the window.

Feeling a little scared that she might get into trouble for trespassing, she again tried to make herself leave. Instead she found herself walking right up to the house and rapping on the screen door.

"Is - is anybody home?" she stammered, peering through the dark screen that was the only door to the house.

A muffled exclamation came from within, and Linda caught sight of a shadowy shape moving hurriedly past inside the gloomy interior.

"Hello!" Linda called a little louder. Then she tentatively opened the screen door and stepped inside.

Horried, she put her hand in front of her mouth to stop herself screaming. Standing across the room from her was a shadowy figure.

"Wh-who are you?" Linda asked, squinting in the dim light of the room to make out the shape of a young woman, veiled from head to toe in some kind of sheer cloth.

"Leave!" a voice behind the veil ordered. And then, as if pleading, the voice added, "Please, just go!"

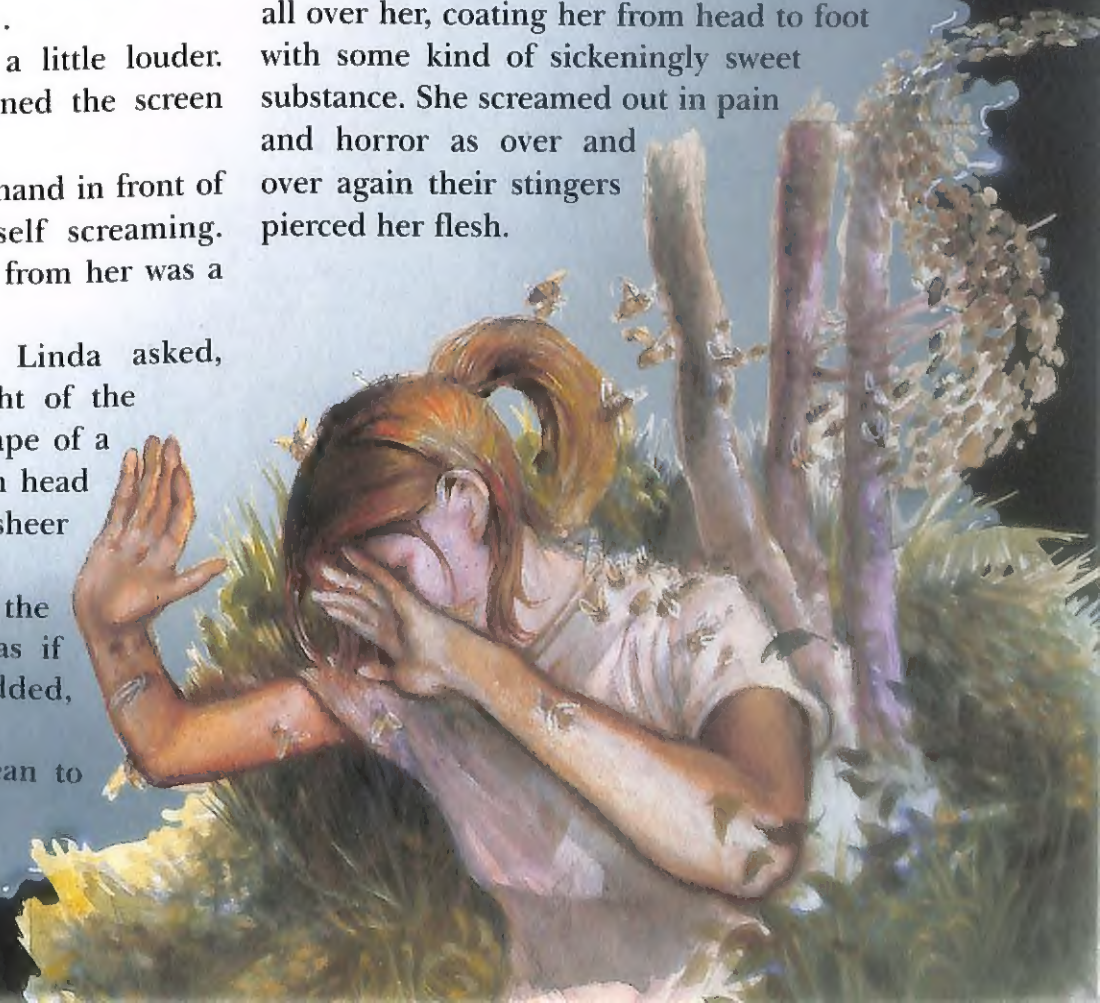
"I - I really didn't mean to

disturb you," Linda stammered.

"There's no time to explain!" the voice behind the veil cried. "I don't have long, but you can still save yourself. Run from this horrible place as fast as you can!"

Linda didn't need to be told twice. She turned on her heel, bolted from the house, and was soon racing full-speed across the meadow. From behind, up on the hill, she heard the beekeeper calling after her. But she didn't turn round. Whatever curiosity had driven her back to this place was now replaced with blind fear that only made her want to get away.

She had almost reached the bank leading up into the woods when a sudden ear-numbing drone filled her ears. It got louder and louder, until Linda felt she would go deaf from the terrible sound. She glanced up in terror. Descending on her was a sky-blackening swarm of the largest, most hideous bees she had ever seen. Instantly they were all over her, coating her from head to foot with some kind of sickeningly sweet substance. She screamed out in pain and horror as over and over again their stingers pierced her flesh.



Dreamily, her eyes half closed, Linda felt someone lifting her head and feeding her something from a tin cup. It was sticky and sweet like honey, but it tasted glorious!

"Drink!" commanded a raspy voice that sounded like that of the beekeeper. "This is my larval nectar. It is the secret of my life's work. Drink this and the last stage of your transformation will be complete."

Unable to stop herself – for the liquid was irresistibly good – Linda drank. As though the sweet substance was putting life back into her, she slowly felt energy returning to her body. Now able to force her eyes open, Linda focused on her surroundings and saw that she was in a cave. And yes, it was the beekeeper who had been giving her that delicious, energy-building liquid.

The veiled woman stepped out from the shadows. "It was Thaddeus who brought you here," she said. "Just as he brought me, five years ago."

A dozen questions were about to tumble from Linda's mouth when suddenly she experienced an odd tingling sensation throughout her entire body. For a moment, the sensation became one of intense, unbearable pain... as though every part of her being was coming apart.

"The drones did well," the old man said to the veiled woman. "And the larval nectar..." he added, breaking into a maniacal laugh, "...that, of course, is the key!"

Then, as suddenly as it had come, the pain vanished, and Linda drifted into a peaceful sleep, with dozens of veiled women bending over her.

Linda felt strange and oddly

confined as she once again gained consciousness. She opened her eyes and gazed around in disbelief. She was deeper in the cave, it seemed, and the walls of the place were like honeycomb. There was also a steady droning that filled the stifling air.

Trying to move, Linda realized that she was standing upright, trapped in a box of some kind. It had a waxy feel to it and had a coffin-shaped design with a thick opaque layer of wax sealing the front of it.

Banging with her fists, she beat on the waxy lid of the box until it began to give a little. Finally the wax cracked and ruptured slightly. She was screaming for help when first the old man and then the veiled woman came into view, picking their way through the labyrinth of honeycombs that filled the place.

"Help me!" Linda cried.

"Please! Help me get out of this thing!"

"There is no help for you now," the veiled woman said, "nor for me. My five years are done."

"I don't know what you're talking about!" Linda screamed. "Let me out!"

"Our queen's sight seems to be normal," the beekeeper said with a crooked smile. "No more multiple images."

"I'm not a queen!" Linda cried. "What have you done to me?"

"My time is over," the woman repeated, "and yours has just begun." Slowly, she lifted up the long, shroud-like veil, and Linda shrieked in horror.

Before Linda stood a mutated creature,

the face and body a grotesque combination of a young woman and a female bee. Her six limbs were covered with golden fuzz, and each ended in a single, claw-like finger. Her compound eyes were made up of hundreds of tiny human eyes. Although her face

was still that of a teenager, the skin looked wrinkled and sagging, as though in some horrid way it had aged prematurely. The body, too, had a wasted, decrepit look about it.

"I am only sixteen," the poor girl said, a long, hollow tongue flickering in her mouth as she spoke. "But for a bee, that is old. The five years of my life are over."

"I don't understand!" Linda wailed, beating so hard on the waxy covering that her hands began to ache. "Why do you keep talking about five years?"

Smiling, the beekeeper made the odd clicking sound Linda had heard before, and suddenly a horrid droning resonated throughout the ghastly cavern.

And then the bees swarmed in – monster bees the size of footballs.

"Five years is all we live," the transfigured girl said, gasping for breath. "That is the most we have before we become old and worn out. Then it is time for me to die and a new queen to take my place."

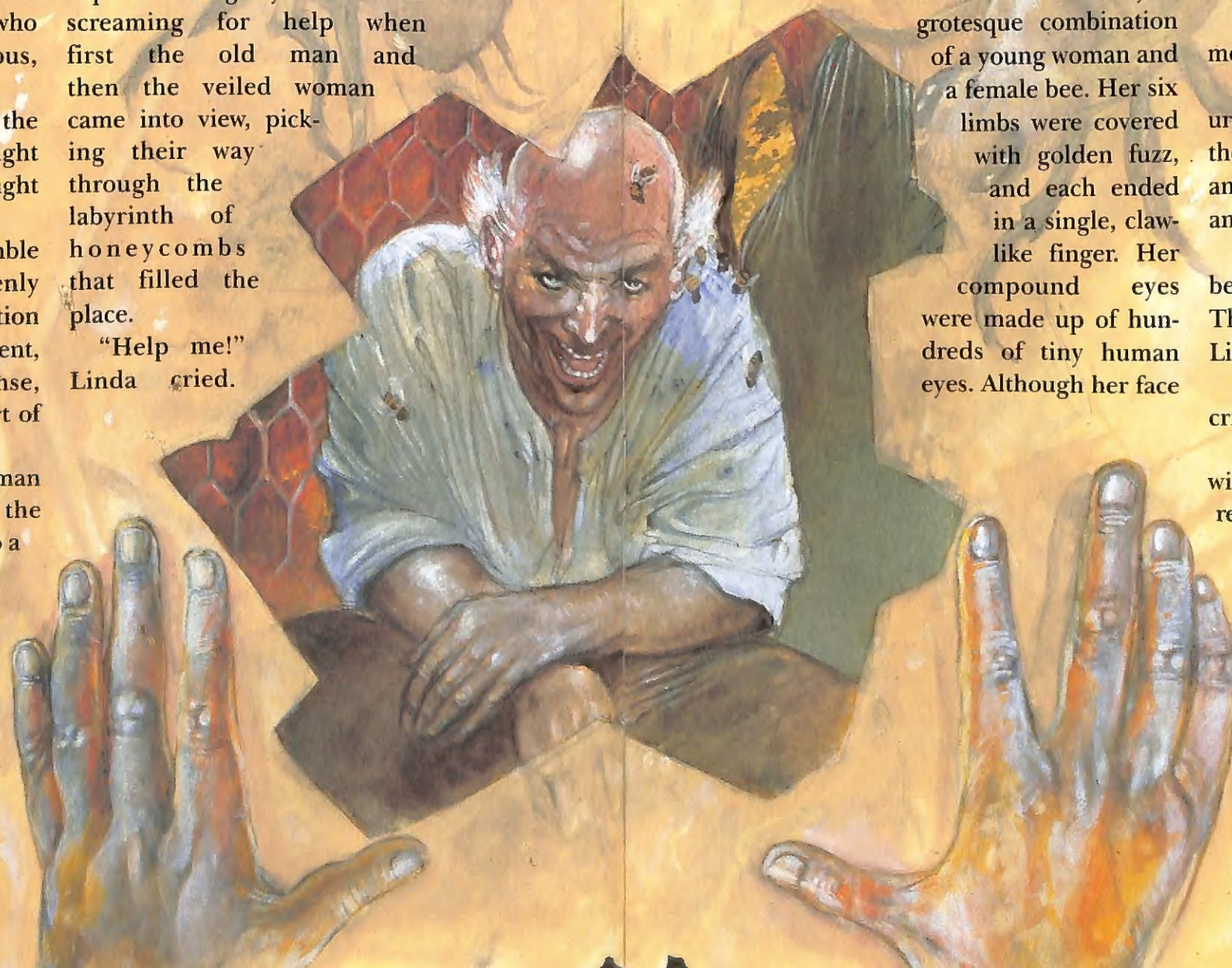
In sheer terror, Linda watched the huge bees crawling all over her wax tomb. They were busy repairing the breaks which Linda had made with her beating fists.

"What have you done to me?" Linda cried in horror.

"You are now their queen!" the man said with a maniacal laugh. "It is your turn to reign... for five years!"

Linda screamed and screamed. But soon her cries of terror and pleas for help were stifled as the bees completed their task of sealing her waxy chamber.

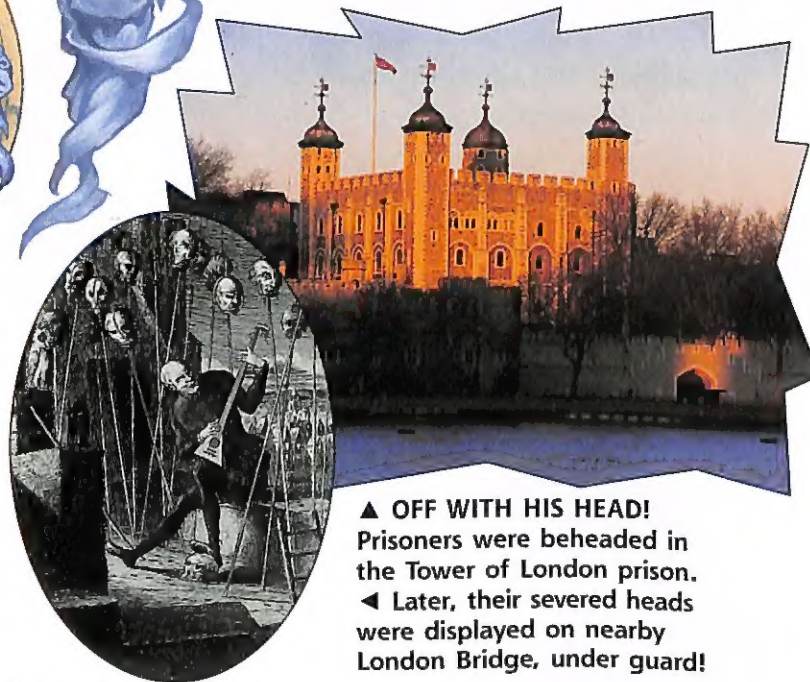
THE END



OUR HAUNTED WORLD



There seem to be more spooky tales from England than anywhere else in the world.



▲ **OFF WITH HIS HEAD!**
Prisoners were beheaded in the Tower of London prison.
◀ Later, their severed heads were displayed on nearby London Bridge, under guard!

HEADLESS - NOT 'ARMLESS!

In days gone by, in the dreaded Tower of London, the head of any prisoner executed by beheading was stuck on a spike near Traitors' Gate as a grisly warning to others. Then, when the body was eventually sent for burial, the head was tucked neatly under the corpse's arm. Some people believe this might explain why so many headless ghosts are seen carrying their severed head under one arm!

HEAVY STUFF!

People living on a housing estate in Barnsley, Yorkshire, weren't prepared for the weird sight that greeted them one morning: four enormously heavy, concrete lamp-posts had been pulled up overnight! They hadn't been snapped off or knocked over – as might have happened in a traffic accident – they had been yanked from the ground, in just the way that someone extremely tall, with Superman's strength, might pull up a weed! Police and local residents remain completely baffled.



BALLS OF FIRE

Scientists argue about the existence of ball lightning. These glowing orange balls move silently and swiftly, then – often after an explosion – they disappear. They've been sighted on lonely moors and even inside rooms!

HAUNTED HAIRY HANDS

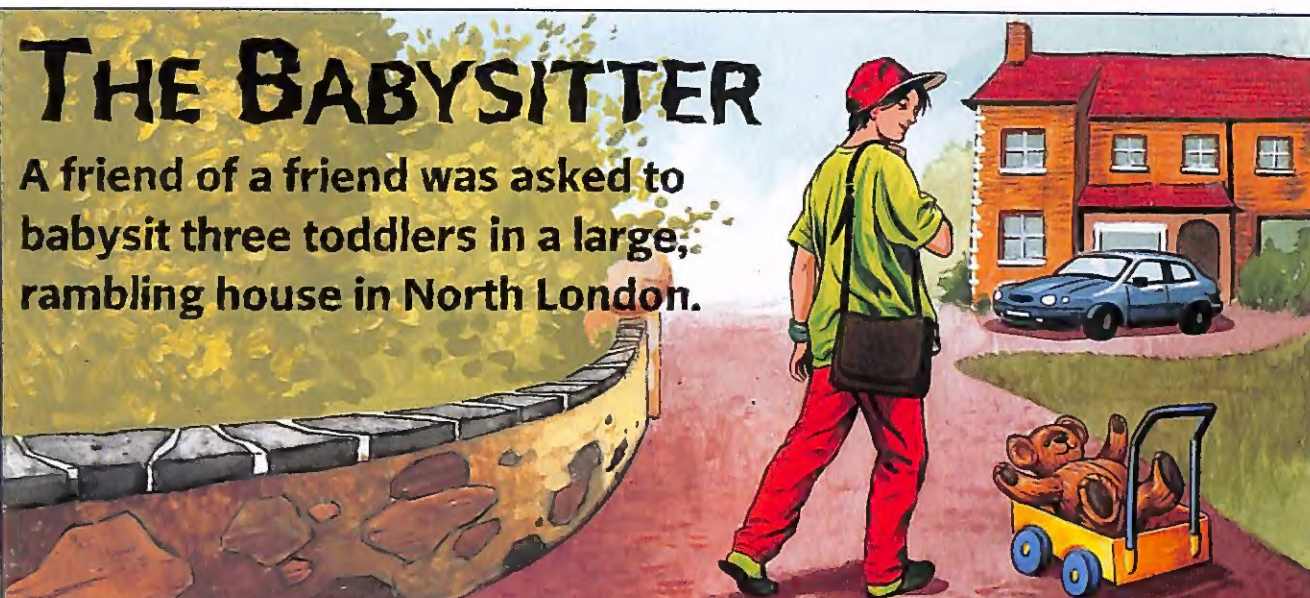
In a lonely part of Dartmoor in Devon, terrified drivers have reported seeing a huge pair of hairy hands which claw at the windscreen, or grab the handlebars of motorbikes, forcing them off the road!

In 1921 a doctor lost control of his motorbike and yelled to the two children in the sidecar to jump clear. The doctor was killed in the crash, but the children survived. They said they saw two huge, hairy hands grab the handlebars of the motorbike! Since then, many terrified drivers and motorcyclists have reported the ghostly, hairy hands!

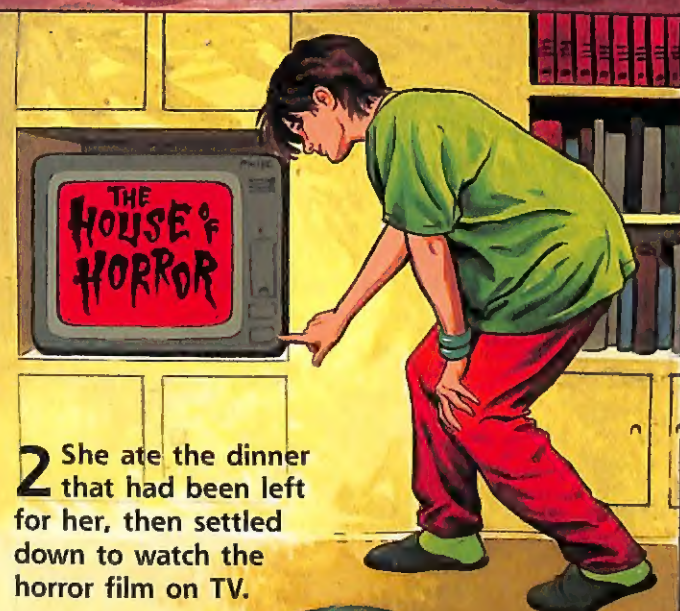


THE BABYSITTER

A friend of a friend was asked to babysit three toddlers in a large, rambling house in North London.



1 Kerry was told that the children were already tucked up in bed. The parents said they would be back at about 1am.



2 She ate the dinner that had been left for her, then settled down to watch the horror film on TV.



3 She'd just decided that the film was a bit too scary when the phone rang. It really made her jump!



4 Kerry answered the phone. She expected it to be the children's parents, checking that everything was OK.

5 But when no one spoke she hung up, puzzled. A little later the phone rang again. This time Kerry heard a man laughing crazily.



6 Seriously spooked, Kerry called the operator, who told her that if the caller rang again, she should try to keep him talking. They could then try to trace where the call was coming from.



7 When the phone rang again, Kerry nervously picked it up, only to hear maniacal laughter once more. She tried to keep him on the line, asking who he was and why he was doing this.



8 The crazy caller hung up, but a few seconds later the operator rang, saying:



We've traced the call to the other phone line in your house!



BIGFOOT

Special Investigation File: 7
To look at the evidence for the
existence of mystery ape-like beasts
Location: mountains of California, USA

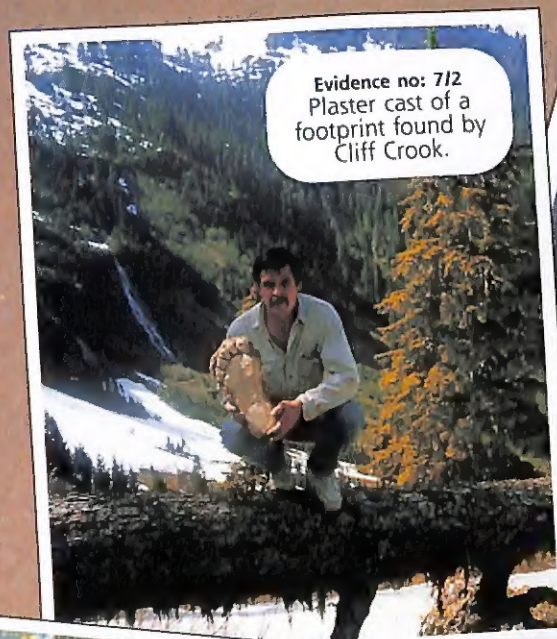
SpineChiller creates a file

Anatomy of a mystery

Hundreds of witnesses describe Bigfoot as an upright, ape-like creature of about two metres tall with a hairless face and pointed head. It has long arms, gigantic feet and a powerfully built body covered in long, dark brown hair. The huge trees that are often found snapped in half near Bigfoot sightings suggest a creature of enormous strength.

Where in the world...?

There are many stories from the wilder, more remote corners of the world that describe large, hairy creatures, bigger than humans. In the Himalayas they are called Yeti or Abominable Snowmen, while the Siberians call them Tungu, and the Canadian name is Sasquatch. Bigfoot is the name given to them by the Americans.



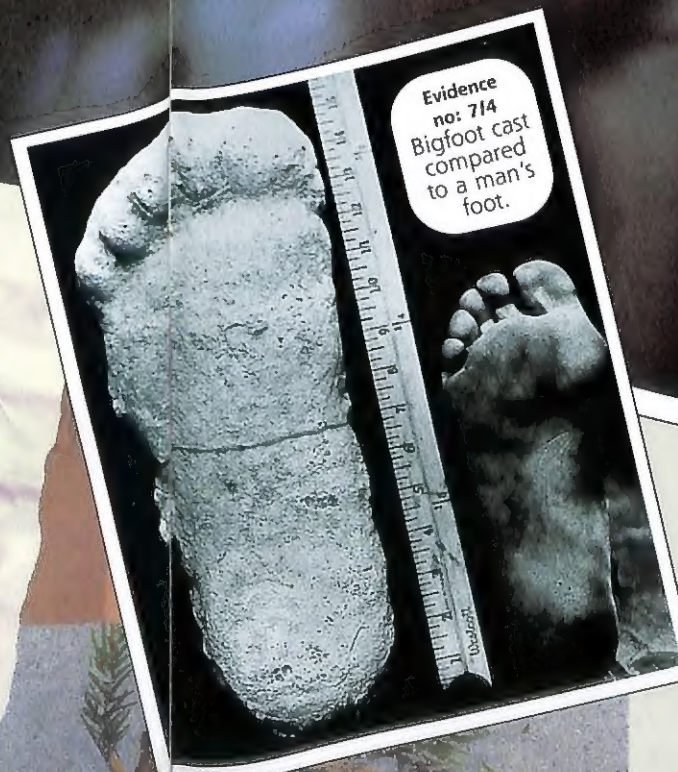
Evidence no: 712
Plaster cast of a footprint found by Cliff Crook.



Evidence no: 713
Bigfoot, photographed by a forest patrol officer at Wild Creek.

Food for a Legend

Bigfoot families have been seen digging deep into rocky ground for nests of hibernating rodents. They have also been seen eating fish and oysters from freshwater lakes. Scientists looking for hard evidence of Bigfoot have found enormous piles of excrement which are 10cm wide and up to 1.5 metres long! Nothing else in the area is known to produce droppings as big as this, and local jokers say that this may account for the loud wails and groans reportedly heard by people walking in Bigfoot country!



Evidence no: 714
Bigfoot cast compared to a man's foot.

SCIENTIFIC DISAGREEMENT

Russian scientists think that Bigfoot may be Pithecanthropus erectus, an ape-like animal – not human – that had the same evolutionary roots as man. Other experts believe the creature is from the thought-to-be extinct giant primate group of Gigantopithecus. They may have crossed from Siberia to Alaska in the mists of time when the two land masses were still joined. But until someone produces hard evidence, the rumoured reward for capturing Bigfoot – dead or alive – remains unclaimed!

Evidence no: 711
An artist's impression of how Bigfoot might look.

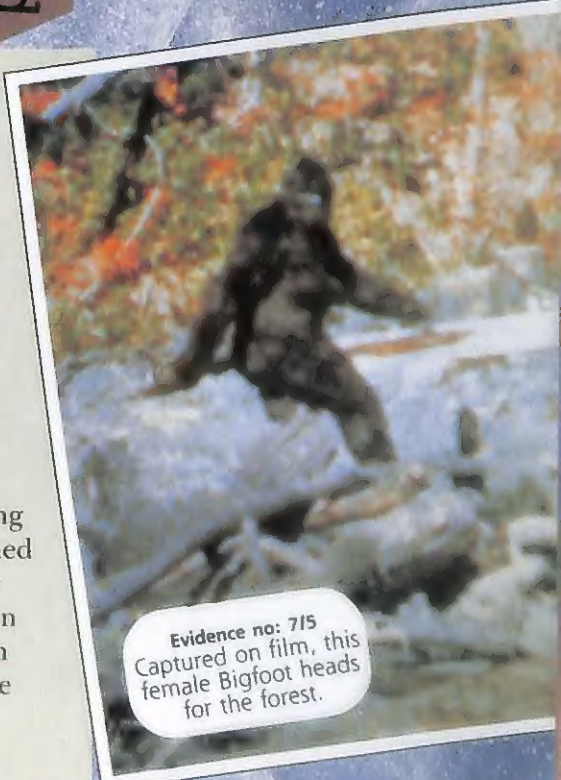
Legendary Footprints
Long trails of over 3000 footprints, 46cm long by 18cm wide, have been found. The trails cover distances of several kilometres. These clues, found in wild areas, are not of the kind that a hoaxer might try to create.

Unexplained

Caught on Film?

The Bigfoot of Bluff Creek, California, became world famous in 1967, when it was allegedly filmed by Roger Patterson. His wobbly, hand-held camera caught on film a tall, hairy female Bigfoot whose long breasts and loping walk have been argued about ever since.

Hollywood special effects experts were recently asked to create a really convincing Bigfoot outfit. But their best efforts, filmed on location in Bigfoot country, never looked like anything other than a man dressed in a gorilla suit. Scientists in the USA, Moscow and London now agree that Roger Patterson's amazing film is probably genuine.



Evidence no: 715
Captured on film, this female Bigfoot heads for the forest.

CLASSIC

SERIAL



Chapter 2

The Portrait Painter

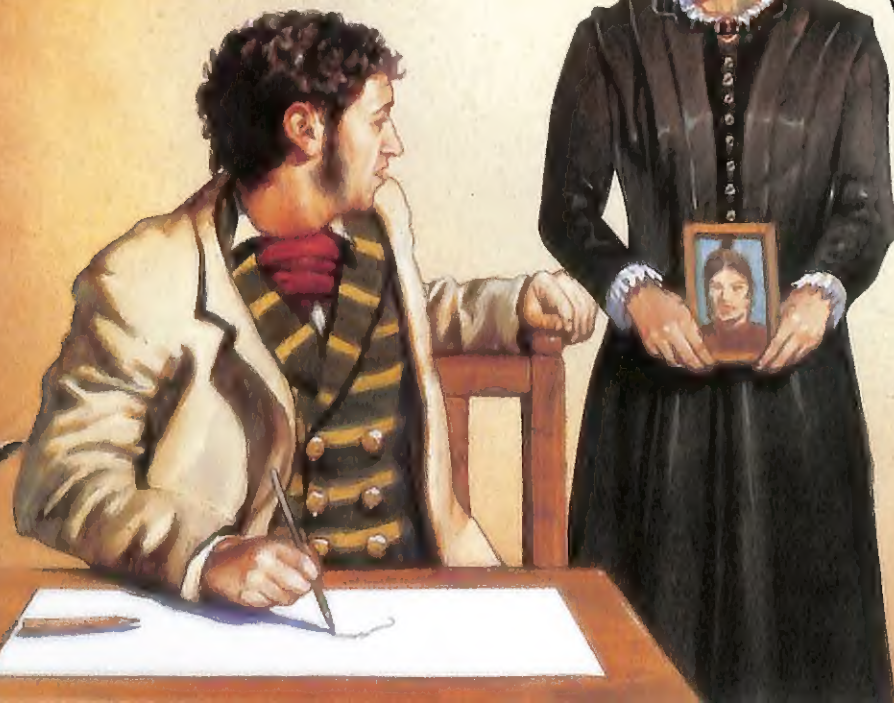
Retold from a story by Charles Dickens

It was nearly Christmas and one afternoon, as daylight was fading, I was sitting at my desk writing letters when suddenly I sensed that someone was standing at my elbow, even though I had not heard anyone enter. I looked round and there stood the lady in black. My surprise must have shown on my face for she said, "I'm sorry if I've startled you. Perhaps you didn't hear me come in?"

She looked at me earnestly and straightaway asked me if I had done any paintings of her. I confessed that I had not.

"This is sad news, as I urgently require one for my father," she replied. Then she produced an engraving of Lady M. A., similar to the one she had shown me at Alvingham.

"This might help you," she said. "They say this portrait has a strong likeness of me."



And, laying her hand imploringly on my arm, she whispered, "I beg you, paint my portrait. You cannot imagine how vital it is that you do so."

I could see that this was no light-hearted request, so I picked up my pencil there and then and started to make a sketch of her. But my visitor would not pose for me, and moved around the room, pretending to look at the pictures hanging on the walls. I managed to make two quick sketches before the room grew too dark to see my subject in any detail. I shut my sketchbook and as I did so, she shook my hand firmly, said 'goodbye' and walked to the front door. I watched as she stepped into the gloaming. She seemed to fade into the darkness, rather than disappear out of sight in the normal way. But perhaps it was just a trick of the light.

Would I ever see her again? What was I to do with the sketches I'd made? These matters troubled me. But I had work to do and a few days later I had to leave for Leicestershire. I had sent ahead some large canvases, but when I arrived at my destination I discovered that they had gone to the wrong station and that it would take several days to get them back. I made use of the time by



person I most wish to see. You are a portrait painter, are you not? I want you to paint a portrait of my daughter. Can you come with me straightaway?"

I did not feel like painting anyone's portrait at that moment, let alone that of a stranger, and so I explained that I could not as I was only to be in Staffordshire for the next two days. But the stranger was so insistent, and looked so weary, that I agreed and found myself accompanying him the short distance to his home. He was silent as we walked and when we arrived he introduced me to his daughter Maria and then promptly left the room.

arranging to do some business in South Staffordshire. On my way there, I had to spend a night at Lichfield. Having settled down to an evening of solitude at the Swan Hotel, I remembered that an old acquaintance of mine once lived in the town. I rang for the waitress and asked, "Does Mr Lute still live in Cathedral Close?"

"He does," she replied.

So I sent him a note, suggesting that he might join me for a couple of hours at the hotel. About twenty minutes later a middle-aged stranger was shown into my room. He looked pale and gaunt. Holding up my note in his trembling hand he explained that I seemed to have made a mistake. I apologised, and asked whether there might be another Mr Lute living in Lichfield. He said there was not. Then I described my friend, and explained that he had married a lady named Fairbairn some two years ago.

"Ah yes," he replied. "I believe you are referring to Mr Clyne. He did live in Cathedral Close, as I now do, but he has since moved away."

As soon as he said the name 'Clyne' I realised that this was, indeed, my friend's name. I apologised once more and admitted that I did not know why I had said 'Lute' instead of 'Clyne'.

My visitor then took me by surprise.

"There's no need to apologise," he said. "As it happens, you are the very

Maria was a fair-haired girl of about fifteen but her quiet, confident manner made her seem much older. She told me that her father had retired for the evening, as he was feeling unwell, and she invited me to sit by the fire. I explained that her father had asked me to paint a portrait of her or her sister, if she had one. When she heard this, she fell silent for a moment and gazed at the fire. Then she looked up, and in a quiet voice she related that her older sister Caroline, whom her father adored, had died nearly four months previously and that her death had thrown her father into a state of deep shock. He had often wished for a portrait of Caroline, and Maria thought that such a portrait might restore him to good health.

She paused, struggling to stifle her tears. Then she spoke.

Underlined words are explained in WORD POWER.

THE FACTS

Charles Dickens (1812-70) is one of Britain's most famous authors. His writing was influenced by his childhood, when his father



was always in debt, and by the harsh conditions of working people at that time. Another great influence was his love of ghost stories. When little, he had a 13-year-old nursemaid who was brilliant at telling a spine-chilling tale. Later Dickens used these stories. He certainly believed in the supernatural. When *The Portrait Painter's Story* was first published, Dickens was contacted by a man who said he was a real portrait painter and that the story Dickens told had actually happened to him!

"Oh sir, it's no use hiding this from you any longer – Papa is no longer a sane person. Ever since Caroline's death, he says he is always seeing her. The doctor says we must keep all sharp objects out of his reach. Much of the time, like tonight, he cannot talk to us."

She begged me to return the next day, and try to paint a portrait of her sister. I asked if they had any photographs or sketches of her, but Maria said no. I promised to try to do a portrait from Maria's description of her sister.

Next morning I started drawing. But though I did sketch after sketch, Maria confessed that none of them looked like Caroline. Towards the end of the day, Maria saw that I was growing tired and thanked me for my efforts.

"It is a great pity I cannot find the

engraving of a lady who looks very much like Caroline. I am sure it would have helped you picture her," she continued.

"What has become of this engraving?" I asked.

"Oh, it has been missing from the book for about three weeks now."

"Can you remember whose portrait it is? I may be able to get a copy in London."

"It was a portrait of Lady M. A.," she replied.

Instantly I remembered the engraving the lady in black had pressed on me. I excused myself and fetched my sketchbook, with the engraving tucked inside it. When I showed my sketches and the engraving to Maria she looked at them in disbelief.

"Where did you get these?" she whispered, with a hint of fear in her voice. But before I could answer, she took the sketchbook from me and rushed out of the room. When she returned her father was with her.

Without even greeting me, he strode across the room and, scarcely able to contain his excitement, he blurted out, "I knew that I was right! It was you with my dear daughter, and it was she who sent me these sketches. Oh, thank you, kind sir," he said, stepping forward to

shake my hand vigorously, "I will value these more than any other possession, except for my daughter Maria."

Mr Lute no longer looked weary or gaunt, and as he held the sketches in his hands, Maria opened a book and showed me the blank page where the engraving of Lady M.A. had been, and I could see the glue marks where the print had been stuck down. Then she turned over the engraving that the lady in black had

given me and I saw that the glue marks on the back corresponded exactly with those on the blank page.

And so my story draws to a close. Mr Lute did not want me to make any changes or additions to the pencil sketches of his daughter Caroline, but he begged me to start an oil portrait of her immediately. He sat by my side for hours, chatting cheerfully, occasionally suggesting corrections in my work.

The next day he spoke about our chance meeting.

"I cannot explain how you came to write to me from the Swan Hotel," he continued. "But as soon as I saw you, I knew you were the man I had seen with my daughter at a dinner table in a country house, and later in a crowded room, and later still at a desk, writing or drawing. The doctors considered that I was suffering from delusions, but in fact I have seen Caroline many times since her death."

I finished the portrait in London and sent it to Mr Lute, who has completely recovered his health. It now hangs in his bedroom, with the following words written underneath it: 'C.L., 13th September 1858, aged 22.' The 13th September is not the date of Caroline Lute's death; it is the day this portrait painter first met her.

THE END

WORD POWER

gloaming – dusk

stifle – hold back, prevent

delusion – mistaken idea or belief

NEXT ISSUE:

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde by R L Stevenson



PLANET VENUS PUZZLES

FASCINATING FACTS

During the flight of the space rocket Mariner 1 in 1962, a computer programmer forgot a hyphen when programming the rocket's course. As a result Mariner veered off course and was lost. The project cost 18.5 million dollars – was this the most expensive hyphen in history?

FREAKY FACTS

There are enough telephone cables running under New York to reach from Earth to Venus.

CRATER LIFE

These inhabitants of Venus live in craters. One crater is filled with 3-eyed aliens and the other, 4-eyed aliens. Which crater has the most aliens in it?

SPACESHIP

Look carefully at the faces in the windows, then work out which faces ought to be in the blank one.

VENUSIAN TALK

The inhabitants of Venus use numbers instead of vowels when they write. Can you work out this question?

D4/45C4M23NP21C2?

EARTH ANIMAL

Spaceman Sid is trying to describe an animal found on Earth. Venusians like riddles so Sid has made one up. Can you work out the name of the creature?

















My first is in kitchen and also in cook,
My second's in glance but not in look.
My third is in naughty and also in nice,
My fourth is in freezing but not in ice,
My fifth is in alien, my sixth is in rare,
My seventh and eighth in double – a pair.
My whole on my planet also is found,
Passing by with a leap and a bound!

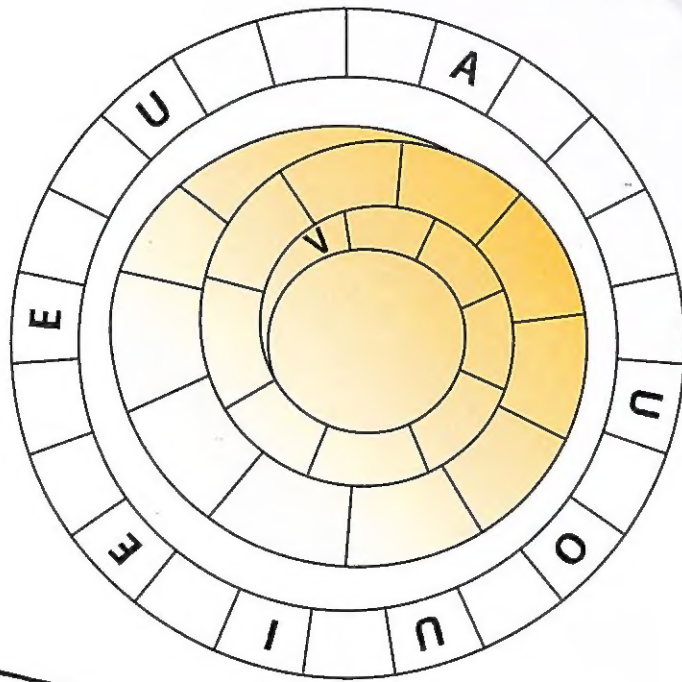
PLANET PUZZLER

The centre spiral contains the names of four planets. The first letter has been put in for you and the last letter is the start of the name of the next planet. Round the edge are the names of the rest of the nine planets – except one. Can you fit them in with the vowels and work out the missing planet's name?

DRIVING PANEL

The aliens have to work out what each button is worth on their driving panel, so that they can use it correctly. Can you help them? Then work out what the column with the question mark adds up to.

				18
				26
				20
				16
18	30	?	12	



FUN FACT

In 1900, this offer was advertised:
Reward offered to the first person to contact an extra-terrestrial!
But not Martians – they are too easy to contact!



ALIEN PLANETS

Some aliens have got lost on Venus and want to go home. Can you see which planet each one belongs to by working out what it is about each planet that makes the aliens look or dress the way they do?

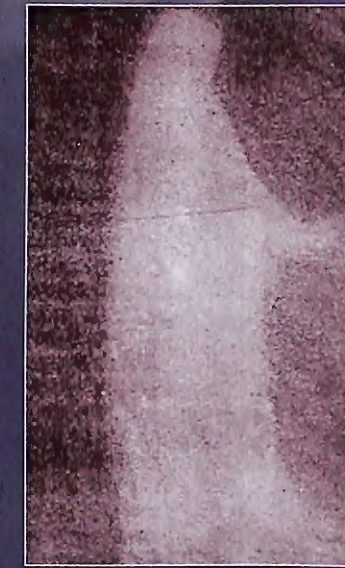


ASTRAL TRAVELS

Is it possible that a person can have two selves – a physical self, and an astral self that can actually travel out of the body? People who have had out-of-body-experiences (OBEs) describe themselves as being in a floating, mirror-image body. This often appears to be attached to the physical body by a long, silvery cord.

WHAT HAPPENS?

Dr Ellison, a professor at the City University in London until 1986, described his OBE as follows: "Slowly I floated upwards... I reached the ceiling and floated through it into the darkness of the roof-space." Many people who have had OBEs describe looking down on their own flesh-and-blood bodies from above.



▲ GHOSTLY FORM

This 1916 photo claims to show the floating astral body of a spiritualist called Miss Lambert.

WHEN DO OBESES HAPPEN?
OBES are often linked to a crisis, such as coming close to death. Thanks to the use of modern techniques of resuscitation, more and more people are literally 'brought back from the dead'. Amazingly, many of these people report similar experiences. While doctors struggle to save their life, they float free of their physical body. As the crisis progresses their astral body travels at speed down a dark tunnel towards a bright and welcoming light. They are welcomed into the light by someone they know who has already died, or by a figure radiating light and love. Finally, they describe being propelled back into their physical body – although some are reluctant to return!



◀ FINAL RELEASE

Artist William Blake's beautiful study of the release of the spirit, or astral body.



► FLOATING AWAY

A modern experiment in astral travelling using coloured glasses.

CONTROLLED ASTRAL PROJECTION

A few people claim to be able to leave their physical bodies at will, and travel or 'project' to other places – even to other dimensions! Two men have written books this century about their astral travels.

The first, Sylvan Muldoon, began astral travelling when he was a sickly child in bed. Later in life, when he was physically well, he completely lost this ability.

The second man was Robert Allen Monroe. His first astral travels, in 1958, seemed to be beyond his control. Later, he claimed that by experimenting, he had explored different dimensions as well as the physical world during his travels.

► TUNNEL OF LIGHT

In the 1500s, this artist showed the approach to heaven as a journey down a tunnel to a shining light.

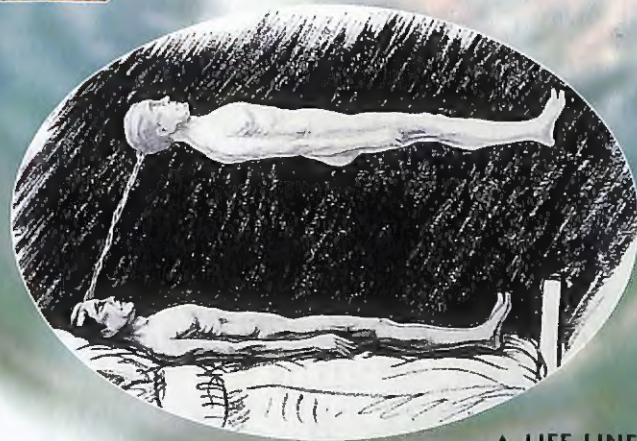


ALL IN THE MIND?

Some people argue that there is a logical explanation for OBEs and that the mind does strange things if it is under stress. Perhaps astral travellers are confusing images from their imagination with reality. But this does not explain people's ability to describe events or objects well beyond where their physical body was located.

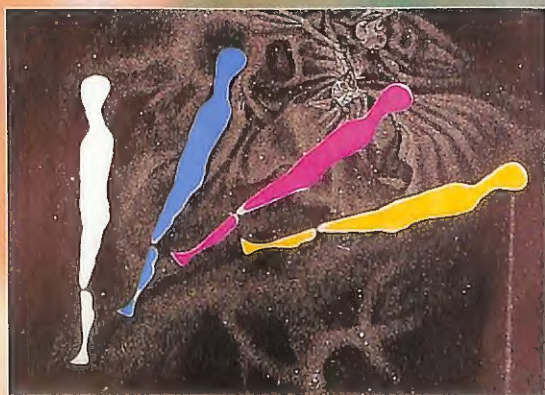
A CASE OF TELEPATHY

Another explanation is that some astral travellers have extra-sensory perception (ESP) skills. So, even if they have not actually travelled to the location they describe, they are in touch with the place, or with a person at that place. This allows them to communicate with the person by telepathy, and to see what the other person can see – and later describe these things.



▲ LIFE LINE

This is how Sylvan Muldoon saw his own experiences of astral travelling.



◀ HOW WE SEE IT TODAY

A modern artist interprets Sylvan Muldoon's description of astral travelling.